

Privilege

which is about two seats from where I started a quarter of a century ago. I don't know, but that is some type of reverse progress. That is the sadness.

Obviously I shared many arguments with colleagues across the way, many debates, and many fine associations, which in part I hope will keep up. Especially what I intend to do and the dilemma it puts on loyal supporters who have supported me and my predecessor, my father, for years are not taken lightly.

On the other hand, I could not recite all the events that have led to today. I wrote a letter to my colleagues in caucus, which has been pretty well circulated and sets out some of my thoughts. There is the sadness, but I think I am honourably doing the right thing in the sense that over a period of time the yoke of caucus and blind loyalty to the leader have been very difficult for me to follow.

I am very serious. I am glad we are on television. We can always debate whether the televising of these proceedings is good or bad for this country, and I was for it. If there is anything that helps smother the respect of this institution, it is that Canadian men and women of good faith, intelligence and character have come here to try to do the job and, as soon as they get here, they find out that they play by the rules of the John A. Macdonald era of one flag, one party, one leader, and vote accordingly. We have all been through it.

That begins the scepticism of a member as to what he is doing here, let alone through the technology of television is given the boil of cynicism in the public domain as to what goes on here as we politically posture, do not really debate the issues, and often divide on the issues because it all has to be the party line. That is something that is fundamental in this institution and inherent in its defect.

I seriously suggest that at this particular time in this Parliament and with the polls—and I think they will continue to show it—no party is certain of victory with a majority in another election. That is the time when everyone may think they are in charge. That is what we used the last time to have another attempt to reform the rules of this Parliament to try to get it into the 20th century before we get into the 21st century.

I do not want to trespass too long in the House, but I have come to this decision over a period of time, with regret. Other than what I have mentioned in terms of the inherent defect in Parliament, where we have to play the game according to rules from 126 years ago, we have the rhetorical cancer of double-speak. When in opposition, and I spent a lot of time in opposition, we say one thing. Then we get in government and we just say the opposite.

In the days of parchment when few people could read—I know you couldn't see it—you could get away with that, but with television it shows the falseness of this place. Unfortunately the present government is reflecting that in the polls in effect when in opposition, for example, we champion the cause of the Auditor General.

I have been here 25 years. I am not going to take one minute for each of the 25 years, but I am going to try to take a few minutes on something that I think is very serious. I am going to recite a few things because I think it is necessary, along with all the other rhetorical garbage that we have in this House from time to time.

The mandate of trust and change started to erode when the government took office in 1984. We had championed the cause of the Auditor General in the Petro-Canada takeover of Petrofina. As soon as we got in government we took them to court the same as the Grits did. That is the type of double-speak I am talking about. One can go right down the list.

Our opposition critic, who is now the Minister of Finance, said things about the high interest rates in opposition. Then he—

• (1510)

Mr. Speaker: My difficulty is this. I have allowed the hon. member to rise on a point of personal privilege. This is done as a matter of courtesy of the House. As I said in a more jocular tone a few minutes ago, it is not part of the rules and it is not part of the precedents, but it is done as a matter of courtesy.

I would ask the hon. member to come to the point that he wishes to make. It is an unusual indulgence given by the courtesy of the House. It is not given to any member just to give a speech about many things which may be of great importance but which should be properly the